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BOHEMIAN RHAPSODY

New York Fall 2002 Collections

If the recent fall collections are any indication, designers are still looking to the 20th century – specifically the '70s. Folkloric, arts and crafts, and bohemian references abound, with '70s icons such as Talitha Getty, Biba, and Ossie Clark setting the tone. Designers play hard against soft and crisp against fluid fabrications with such disparate materials as corduroy,

chiffon and suede getting a strong play. Embroideries, fur trims, trapunto stitching, beading and lace are all key elements that add to the romantic, nostalgic mood.

TRACY REESE entitled her collection "Love Theme," and that's exactly the mood she conveyed with some of the prettiest blouses and dresses

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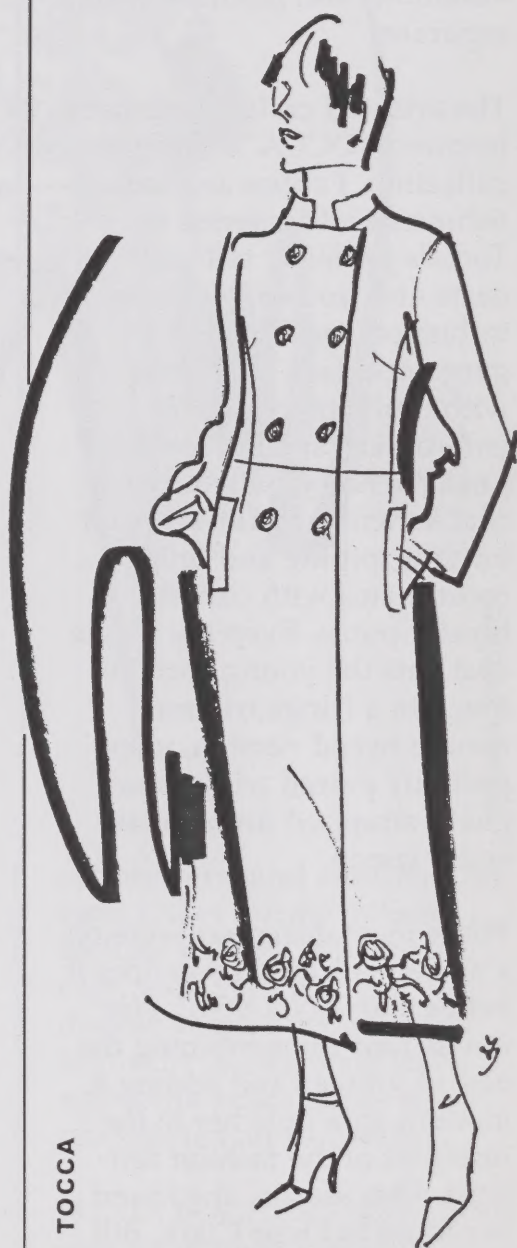
THE MASCULINITY MESSAGE

Fall 2002

Real guys are in! The industry leaders FI spoke with agree unanimously that fall 2002 is about real guys wearing real clothes. They variously refer to the look as the 'masculinity messenger', 'the man show', and Lady Chatterly's Games keeper'.

As David Wolfe, a longtime analyst at the Doneger Group, remarks, "whatever they want to call it, the outcome was that we got to see some pulled together clothes that the average guy is going to be able to relate to for a change." According to Mr.

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TOCCA

of the season. The collection got off to a strong start with a '70s vintage burnout georgette blouse and Ultrasuede skirt, a feminine floral print and lace tiered granny dress, and gorgeous powder blue coats with fur or lace trims. For the descendants of swinging London's Biba girl, Reese provided a charming rose pink stretch piqué princess coat, a black/snow bird's-eye wool coat ensemble, and gladiola print separates.

The arts and crafts movement inspired TOCCA's ladylike collection. Fabrics and embellishments add interest to Tocca's perfectly tailored coats and trousers. Russian influences are found in a gorgeous black maxi-coat with multicolored floral embroidery and enamel buttons. An ivory, belted trench coat softened by flower petal buttons, piping and lining, coordinates with cuffed hipster pants. Even the toggle coat gets the young socialite touch in a fringe trimmed mauve tweed version, unexpectedly paired with a spaghetti strapped dress in lavender suede.

While most designers were on a nostalgia trip, no one does it better than ANNA SUI. Her innate flair for combining the best of vintage and adding a modern spin puts her in the forefront of the fashion zeitgeist. This season, she found her muse in Ossie Clark, Bill Gibb and bohemian hippie

Talitha Getty, English fashion icons from the '70s. Sui's gypsy caravan got rolling with a fabulous folkloric embroidered wool jacket, top and skirt, a cream crepe embroidered dress and black leather embroidered jacket. Other winners included the color blocked and embroidered velvets with Mongolian lamb trim and some delicious floral dresses.

JAMES COVIELLO presented a romantic collection with texture mixes and rich spice tones in interesting combinations. Coviello's strength lies in his sweaters and this season was no exception. Some standouts: the brick hand knit cable pullover with khaki stretch corduroy miniskirt; brick cable skirt and rust cotton smocked peasant top; and cream lace knit tunic with silk chiffon bouquet print skirt. After dark, Coviello offered delicate beaded tulle tops paired with windowpane or plaid trousers, and a romantic beaded tulle ballerina dress.

Under the sponsorship of GIRLS RULE, we found some of the best and brightest young designers. SMASHING GRANDPA offered a mix of Victorian gothic and punk in a black/white hound's-tooth strapless dress with chain detail and adorable mixed tartan tiered miniskirts shown with puff sleeved tees. LOVE LIFE looked to the '40s for inspiration. Fun "ranch hand" printed separates were the stars here. GLO offered a great stretch corduroy jacket with denim trim and rose

embroidery and a rust pin-stripe denim blazer with rose print on the back. FUMAN SKEETO showed easy comfortable velour pieces in fabulous shades of blush and tea green and French terry pieces in beige/brown.

BILL BLASS knows what his ladies want – wearable clothes in lush fabrics with touches of menswear influences. Designer Lars Nilsson plays it safe and satisfying for day with his first group in ivory/black wool or cashmere: the embroidered cashmere, belted coat with sable trim, worn with striped wool pants and ivory turtleneck was an outstanding ensemble. Nilsson also does a great double-faced cashmere coat in embroidered, perforated taupe/red, and a taupe cashmere blazer embroidered in silver. The latter tops a taupe/red/blue striped wool dress. Pure luxe is the sable collared slouchy wrap coat in gray/ivory pinstripe wool/cotton shown over a ginger embroidered suede skirt.

CYNTHIA ROWLEY's collection was a delight from start to finish. Sweetly poetic: her pink embroidered silk shirt and velour trousers; an embroidered waistcoat, pouch pocket hip riding skirt with souvenir pin belt; and a dazzling silver, belted trench coat. Arts and crafts were represented by Rowley's block print dress and cashmere coat. She also tweaks the classic pea coat by adding medallion embroidery and throwing it over a black

DATELINE EUROPE:

Fall 2002

RTW

As far as the European RTW scene is concerned, there's something for everyone. It's all there, crisp tailoring to romantic femininity and "Boho" hipster, in a color palette comprised primarily of neutral, earthy shades with flashes of brights to liven things up. Designers, both here and abroad, are focusing on a mix of fabrics, from rich velvets and re-embroidered laces to textured knits and classic corduroy and leathers.

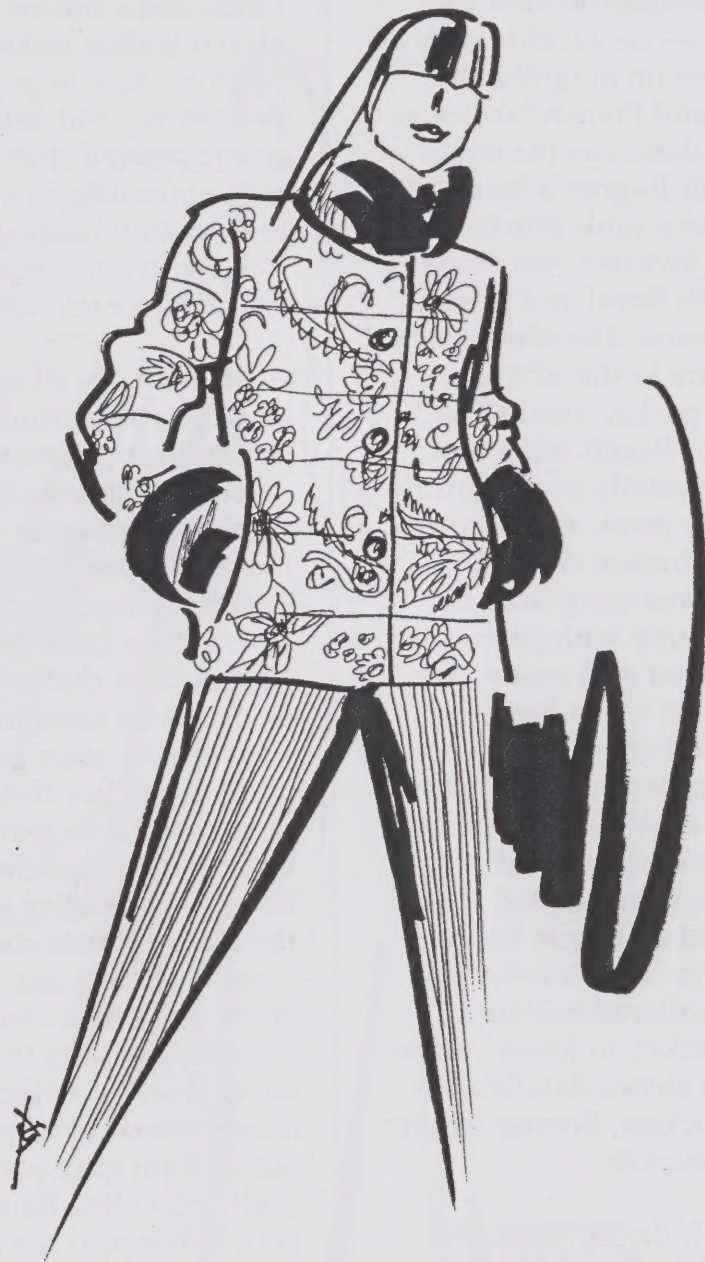
London designer, TED BAKER, showed a strong collection based on the principle of mix/match sportswear components that can be worked in various ways, from updated classic to trendy hipster. According to a company spokesperson, the collection's aimed at the over 25 customer with a contemporary lifestyle. Emphasis is on subtle touches like inside jacket pockets, pretty linings and trompe l'oeil stitch detail-

ing. Highlights included the black/white suiting separates with bicolor linings, the "hard" leather item jacket, and chic glen plaid cuff trouser, with double belt loops, paired with an updated black wool/viscose crop pea coat. The jacket has tonal embroidery detailing on the back. Chic underpinnings include seam detailed fitted crisp

cotton shirts and stretchy knit tops. Other terrific options include Baker's ladylike top coat, with back belt and double vents, over an A-line miniskirt in chocolate wool with pink polka dots – totally unexpected and adorable.

SONIA BOGNER's collection was a complete surprise.

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SONIA BOGNER

Although widely known for skiwear, the luxe sportswear more than holds its own. The mood is sophisticated and elegant — casual chic with an emphasis on magnificent Italian and French fabrics as well as delicious fur trims. Consider Bogner's haute hippie in a cable stitch, fringed sweater coat worn over lush floral and print velvet jeans. The same print reappears in the ultimate quilted parka, collared and cuffed in Ranch mink and tossed casually over pinwale corduroy jeans. Another top features brown rib knit sleeves emerging from a leather body with patch pockets. Leather and suede also look smart when Bogner fashions them into the elegant, understated camel pigskin coat or the dramatic folkloric embroidered shearlings. In general, from the blond cashmere belted coat, with red fox collar, to the fur collared military belted jacket, in loden cotton with tab sleeve details and cargo pockets, Bogner's outerwear is superb.

BAZAAR de CHRISTIAN LACROIX is all about a Bohemian fantasy in rich colors and texture mixes. Standouts include a chic slim tweed coat with patchwork collage effect tweed hem; a chic double-breasted plaid pea coat to work with solid crepe pants; a belted topper in gilt flecked red; and a belted blazer with gold embroidery. Even shearling gets a fresh look:

Lacroix's version comes in a dusty rose tie-dyed cropped jacket shown over embroidered velvet jeans. There are fantastic skinny sweaters with Lurex and a mix of yarns, a glazed leather jacket with patch pockets to pop over everything, and delicate ethnic printed chiffon tops with embroidered appliqués to float atop bootleg velvet jeans with embroidery running down each leg.

At KRIZIA it's all about the classics with attitude. Fall 2002 is very separates oriented, with pieces that can be combined however the customer chooses. The look is striking, crisp, even severe, in a monotone color palette. Krizia offers chic asymmetric skirts, and a sleek hip jacket with angled seam pockets, matte silver bar closures and funnel neckline: shown in black cady, this jacket combined with bootleg pants is the closest Krizia comes to a "suit". There's also a gorgeous reversible charcoal wool topper with the same silver closures — chic day-to-dinner dressing when paired with a light gray paillette shell and cuffed flared trousers. Krizia also has an asymmetric velvet tunic draped top that reverses to an abstract ivory/black print that is very feminine over her soft pants. We also love the sharply tailored one-button jacket with spread collar over panne velvet flares in deep steel blue; her sheer, beaded sweater in a scattered leaf pattern combined with flowing, side-slit, bias cut silk crepe skirt; and a double-

breasted pinstripe wool cady coat and skirt. This season, Krizia brings back her signature intarsia cashmere sweaters in wonderful muted color animal motifs for the die-hard collector.

GAETANO NAVARRA is an Italian based designer collection that emphasizes a very feminine, elegant look. Ruffles, passementerie, tassels, laces, fur accents, grommets and fringe are all part of the fall picture. We love the fabulous mix/match gray knit tops, with fur collars or other details, paired with ruffled chiffon paisley/ tiger stripe printed skirts for a rich hippie look. Truly unique is the black suede jacket and skirt with intricate turquoise/coral/ silver bead detailing. As part of an "English" group, there's a cream color mohair, "Sargeant Pepper" braid trimmed sweater, and another charmer with the Union Jack motif on mohair separates. Navarra adds a ruffled mink collar to her gray angora/ mohair cardigan and works this over a black crepe asymmetric godet skirt. Simply fabulous is a tapestry coat with raw edges and brass ring details. There's also a shorter jacket version to pair with embroidered, sequined jeans. Gold bullion in a paisley pattern decorated other jeans meant to be worn with frilly paisley chiffon tops unexpectedly trimmed with leather fringe.

STEILMANN delivers for the active over 35 woman with a complete collection of coordi-

ground floral print dress.

NANETTE LEPORE covered all the key trends in a perky collection aimed at the very young. Best looks were her romantic blouses in a violet print with stripe denim pants or velvet jumper; and an adorable patchwork, Empire waist, strapless velvet dress. Also cute, her blue tweed puff sleeved "suit" worn under a black lace and striped wool vest; and a black embroidered velvet coat.

While the HALSTON collection as a whole lacked a certain spark, a strong effort was made to appeal to the sophisticated over 30 crowd in need of "real clothes". It succeeded best with a camel embroidered calfskin coat, jersey tank and camel leather slim pants. Also elegant – the straw wool sateen jacket and pants juxtaposed against an embroidered tulle tee. The pearl gray double-faced cashmere outerwear pieces were coolly sophisticated when paired with embroidered underpinnings. The brush stroke printed silk charmeuse envelope top over cashmere pant and the linear beaded chiffon cape topping pajama pants were reminiscent of early Halston. Strongest looks after dark included the ivory pleated gauze gown, a black 4-ply silk bias gown, and the midnight silk mouseline slit-front bias number.

HALSTON



Wolfe, the 34-55 year old customer spends twice as much as the 18-24 year old. This regular guy has had slim pickings over the last few years. Fashion was just too fashion-forward and fit was often a problem. Most men don't work out enough to attain the physique necessary to slip into a laser-cut suit and to look good in a knit top.

Fortunately, designers went full speed ahead for fall with the rugged look, a look that guys are sure to embrace. A movement in this direction began this spring. April 2002 *W*, the Men's Portfolio, features an arresting black and white photo spread shot by Bruce Weber: images of men looking very masculine in relaxed clothes and leather jackets reclining in or on vintage cars. Siegfried and Roy nuzzle their favorite tiger in their 1985 Caddy — what could be more macho? Federated's Vice President and Men's Fashion Director, Jerry Balest, summarizes: "the message for fall is rugged ... town meets country for a relaxed, yet sophisticated country esthetic ... and second, to the bigger message for fall, is the overall influence of the active/athletic as a major statement."

Fabrics, Items, Details

Fabrics definitely toughened up. There were hearty corduroys, wool, tweeds, shearling, Ultrasuede, velvet and high-tech fabrics with substance. Fallon Worldwide Analyst, Tom Julian, noticed an abundance of what he calls the laundered look



(treating fabrics to make them appear aged and well worn). This look is enjoying its second season of popularity.

The following items made David Wolfe's shopping list: a chunkier sweater, corduroy pants, a tweedier sport coat and hi-tech footwear. The Alpine sweater, in both retro and computer enhanced pattern, is particularly big for fall. Tom Julian believes that the vest could be a new category for added business at retail next fall. And, the 2-button jacket, which allows for a roomier fit and greater comfort than the 3-button, is the new jacket. It appeared on Tommy Hilfiger's runway.

Mr. Julian and Mr. Balest both point out the presence of vintage

and rugged references in the collections. These were executed via leather and suede finishes. Says Mr. Balest, "details are of great importance ... special accents such as contrast stitching and special zipper pulls to color blocking and contrast piping help make a garment special."

The Collections

Ron Chereskin — 'Seeks to reinterpret the American active spirit.'

At the Ron Chereskin presentation, editors walked into his Fifth Avenue showroom set up as a ruggedly luxurious ski chalet. The rough-hewn log cabin set-off the beautiful Nordic inspired sweaters and buttery suede and leather pieces far better than an ordinary white runway. Models posed in still life tableaus in colorful alpine sweaters and matching fringed scarves in turquoise and cream. The sweaters were thickly luxurious without being bulky. There was also a gorgeous honey quilted pea coat worn with a thick cream herringbone muffler and 'drapey' pant. For casual afternoons there are cashmere lumberjack jackets in loden and navy plaids. In his secondary line, Mr. Chereskin did not forego luxury. He used a great deal of Ultrasuede, most notably in some color block tracksuits.

Nautica — 'Focus for fall is on the functional and utilitarian.'

Mr. Chu must be applauded for consistently delivering no-nonsense clothing that real guys want to wear and actually buy.

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As Fashion Columnist, Rod Hagwood, of the Miami Sun-Sentinel remarks: "Nautica is playing it very safe, very butch and very basic." This translates into some great pieces in beefy fabrics: an arctic blue corduroy shirt, a dark chocolate pinwale corduroy shirt and a chunky cable turtleneck. Although David Chu's program notes state that the collection is military-inspired, it is apparent that his heart lies in sailing. Of the various groupings on display at the spacious Rockefeller Center store, it was the Stars and Stripes group that made the greatest impression on the editors viewing the informal presentation. The sky blue (so pale it appeared white) sailing shorts and oxford sailing pants are nylon on the outside and fleece-lined. Not only are they functional, but they manage to be stylish as well.

Tommy Hilfiger — 'He was inspired by New England with its tradition-rich heritage.'

Hilfiger continued the traditional preppy theme he did so well for spring into fall. The show was full of clothing that many men will be sure to find desirable and feel comfortable wearing. His goal was to create a collection that was masculine, relaxed, and naturally refined: what a wealthy preppy would wear to a dinner dance at a house on the water in Hyannis is the look. In accomplishing this endeavor, Mr. Hilfiger hit on quite a few of the season's leading trends. Men can look forward to picking up the sort of clothes many guys consider to be staples to their wardrobes. Layering was

key, working well in combinations such as a pea coat worn with athletic pants, button-downs and vest. There was an ivory/navy striped velour turtleneck worn under a roomy black wool pea coat, an outfit any sailor would love. Vests appeared, cut in hearty fabrics such as windowpane checked wool and rag wool. The new 2-button jacket looked right with a matching vest and a brown herringbone wool pant. Watch caps contributed to the upscale longshoreman look, as did chunky navy/ivory rag wool zip-front cardigans worn under pea coats. When a man has to go dressed-up-casual, there is a nicely cut charcoal wool overcoat to wear with a red racing stripe turtleneck and a heather gray cotton track pant. His interpretation of black tie is a black wool 3-button tux worn with a ruffled shirt in chambray and a hooded sweatshirt, somewhat reminiscent of the insouciant look of Marc Jacobs' menswear. In Tommy's book, today's man is definitely not a sissy, even dressed-up he appears casual.

Perry Ellis — Real guys want to wear real clothes.

Not quite the definition of real guys, the real people modeling the clothes were famous or quasi-famous: Simon Doonan, Jonathan Adler, Patrick McMullan and Ethan Zohn of Survivor fame. The men wore earth tone clothes that Rod Hagwood of the Miami Sun-Sentinel described as easy-on-the-eye sportswear. The coats were winners! There was a wonderful caramel leather car coat and terrific camel wool/cashmere shearling trimmed duffel coat. And for more formal occasions, a version of a house classic, the camel wool and

cashmere blend double-breasted overcoat. For the most part, the pants were cut for comfort. Khakis and jeans were plentiful. For evening, there was an olive velvet suit, and a pea coat and piped trouser with white cotton pleated shirt. Designer Jerry Kaye succeeded in putting together many looks that fell neatly into the new formal/casual category. As one male editor said to another at the end of the show, "it's easy but elegant. This is how urban guys want to look."

Juan Anon — It's the rugged mountain man or a sexy Paul Bunyan.

Juan Anon, for those who don't know, is actually a beautiful woman who, a few years ago, used to have her own downtown boutique. At her downtown show, upstairs from a couple of art galleries, she dressed her models to look ruggedly handsome, as if they had been mountain climbing for the weekend. Layering, as at the more commercial Hilfiger show, was key. There was a chunky gray wrapped neck sweater-vest worn under matching knee length cardigan paired with khaki stretch denim wide leg trousers. Although this sounds bulky, it did not come-off that way. A more tailored/dressed up look was a beautiful camel silk cashmere wrapped neck sweater with a khaki/nylon slim pant. The colors were sensible: black, camel and gray with wines and berries as accents. Shearlings looked great, particularly as vests. Standouts were a black lamb shearling vest with denim trim and a short zip-jacket with raw unfinished armholes.

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nated groups and separates. Fabrications are primarily travel-worthy blends (90% washable) for the busy woman. In the black group with red/white accents, there are flat-front cuffed or side-slit trousers. Sharp looking — the glen plaid with lace insert on either leg for a feminine take on the classic menswear look. The reversible faux fur/nylon cire zip-front coat and a snap-front shirtdress with pick stitch detail, from Steilmann's iridescent denim group, are the essence of sporty chic. Colors here are copper, brown, or blue.

Highlights from some of the other RTW collections include: the pinwale corduroy baby blazer, perfect duffel coat, and color blocked tops from the very preppy French collection LE PHARE de la BALINE; and RENATO NUCCI's delicious multicolored boucle and tweedy jackets and tulip skirts, with matching stiletto heeled boots. In a fantastic range of chunky wool, chenille velvet, felted wool and boucle are rustic chic pullovers, cardigans, and tunics from POLES. Finally, the Montreal-based firm MARGARET M. has a very contemporary European aesthetic. Standouts here are chic belted tweed coats from the penny lane group, a 3-button, shaped tweed jacket, with fur edged notch-collar, worn over bootleg pants; and vintage flocking and panne separates.

Jason Bunin — Ode to the gigolo and the racecar driver.

Showing his men's collection at Parsons this season, Jason Bunin also used the occasion to present some great women's pieces. For the guys there was plenty of color, like taxi yellow and royal blue that contrasted nicely with black and navy. Even Mr. Bunin slightly relaxed the skintight silhouette he's known for. Ultrasuede was a sponsor and accordingly, it was a highly visible fabric, most notably in a white/blacktop hound's-tooth Ultrasuede sleeveless shirt worn with a cotton twill double-breasted car coat and slouchy wool crepe trouser. He wasn't afraid to use color — he never is — and lined a midnight 1-button jacket with an eye-popping blue lining. He touched on another leading trend, combining materials within one garment, as in his midnight Ultrasuede half-n-half jean (half Ultrasuede, half denim). Noteworthy was a yellow parka with his signature French cuff button-down and a safety belt pant.

Sean Jean — Hollywood's leading man, circa 1940, goes to Saville Row.

Although FI did not attend the show, it looks as if Mr. Combs scored a grand slam. The experts were unanimously enthusiastic about the collection. David Wolfe called the show sensational and retro in feeling, reminiscent of Hollywood's leading men of the '30s and '40s and, best of all, appealing to men 20-70. Mr. Combs incorporated the season's most popular fabrics: corduroy, cashmere, and velvet. The burgundy double-faced cashmere/

velvet cut-away coat and matching velvet tuxedo pants that appeared at the finale were "jaw dropping" raved Rod Hagwood in his coverage.

THE RETAIL OUTLOOK

Yet, even with fashions that entice men to buy, hopes for a profitable bottom line may be undermined by an ongoing problem: according to Teri Gains, a fashion authority who writes for the Wall Street Journal, consumers have been spoiled by extreme markdowns. However, retailers and analysts alike remain optimistic that this season's real clothes will translate to consumers leaving stores with shopping bags brimming with items purchased at full price.

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